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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 001907

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: NEW SOUTH KIVU GOVERNOR PRESENTS PLANS FOR THE PROVINCE

REF: KINSHASA 00710

Classified By: PolOff TJNaber, reasons 1.4 b/d.

1. (SBU) Summary: During a November 17 meeting, newly appointed Governor of South Kivu Deogratias Buhamba-Hamba outlined his top five priorities for the province. These are: 1) improved intercommunity relations, 2) rebuilding and development, 3) ending recruitment by local militias, 4) regional relations with neighboring countries, and 5) elections. He said he viewed the governorship as a call to service and promised integrity and good governance. He also said he would like a strong relationship with the U.S. in South Kivu. End summary.

#### New Management for a Troubled Province

2. (SBU) Deogratias Buhamba-Hamba was named Governor of South Kivu November 10, filling the vacant post of Augustin Bulaimu, who was removed from the governorship for poor management and large-scale embezzlement (reftel) April 25, 2005. (Note: Vice Governor Kaningini has been the Acting Governor since Bulaimu's removal. End note.) Buhamba, a 52-year-old native of Bukavu, spent his entire professional career with Chanimetal (a Belgian ship metal company) in Kinshasa. He retired in 2004, after thirty years of employment, as the Director of Administration and Finance. Buhamba is new on the political scene and an unknown in political circles. He is a member of the "political opposition" block which holds the South Kivu governorship in the transition government. (Note: Within the "political opposition" block, Buhamba is a member of the "Forces du Futur", the party of Vice President Z'Ahidi Ngoma. End note.)

#### A Five-Point Plan for South Kivu

3. (C) During an introductory meeting with emboffs in Kinshasa November 17, Buhamba outlined his five-point plan for South Kivu. His first goal is good intercommunity relations and a reduction of "tribal" animosity. He vowed to hire people from all ethnic groups in his administration. (Note: Scheduled to formally visit Vice President Ruberwa, an ethnic Tutsi, on November 17, Buhamba anticipates some critics will claim he is an extremist in the pay of Rwanda or the Rwandophone population. End note.) His second goal, to focus on concrete rebuilding and development actions, came with a request to USAID for non-monetary assistance (bulldozers) in clearing a washed-out road that prevents Bukavu residents from reaching the local market. He said that he wanted to show the people that he is not a Chanimetal bureaucrat but a leader who will take action quickly. His third goal is to fight "negative forces" by improving the economic situation and creating jobs. He reasoned that the militias will not be able to find new recruits among the population if the people are already employed. Fourth, Buhamba plans to focus on regional relations with Rwanda, Burundi, and Tanzania. He noted that South Kivu has more international borders than any other province. Finally, he said he would prepare the population for the upcoming elections.

#### Politics NOT as Usual

4. (C) Buhamba said he sees his appointment as a "call from God" to serve his country, his region, and his population. He presented himself as a scrupulously honest man, comfortably well-off, and uninterested in the material benefits of a life in politics. Indeed, he denounced politicians who take positions to enrich themselves. He stressed his financial and professional ethics, and noted he had notified President Kabila of emboffs' visit to him as "governors cannot conduct diplomacy without presidential knowledge." He also volunteered information about a Chanimetal accusation that he favored a particular client financially just prior to his retirement, saying he fought the Belgian company in court and won a judgment in his favor. Buhamba said former governor Bulaimu impressed him as useless and ineffective and said the former governor could not even provide him with basic information on salaries or current issues in the province.

15. (C) Comment: Having lived outside of South Kivu for several decades, Buhamba must assert himself quickly to become an effective player in provincial politics, and at least some members of the GDRC are counting on that not happening. But Buhamba may surprise them. He is an honest man who takes his new position very seriously; the population of South Kivu needs exactly that after suffering through the misgovernance of Bulaimu and the questionable actions of Acting Governor Kaningini. If he can navigate the difficult South Kivu political situation, he could be a force for positive change in the region.

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